

Awareness Training

On

OxyContin



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Navy Personnel Command
Drug Detection and Deterrence Branch (Pers-6715)
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[Email](#)

TAKE TIME TO PREPARE!

One of the best ways to combat illicit drug abuse by Sailors is to stay informed and keep them informed.

I. Goal: From the information presented, participants will become aware of what OxyContin is, who is abusing OxyContin, what the symptoms are, and what the legal and health consequences of OxyContin abuse are.

II. Training Objectives: Participants will be able to:

- ◆ Identify the forms of OxyContin, how it is supplied and used, and how OxyContin is abused
- ◆ Explain how OxyContin is illegally distributed
- ◆ Cite the long term and short term effects and health consequences of OxyContin abuse.
- ◆ Cite the Federal law and Navy policy concerning OxyContin abuse.

III. Information:

- ◆ This awareness training has been developed so the information can be delivered, in whole as part of command GMT or in part via Plan-of-the-Day notes, memos, Division/Workcenter notices, flyers, posters, etc.
- ◆ Before conducting training, trainer may wish to get further information from:

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) by logging on the NIDA website: www.drugabuse.gov or call toll free 1-888-644-6432;

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol & Drug Information (NCADI)
Website: www.health.org or call toll free 1-800-729-6686;

Navy Drug Detection and Deterrence Branch (Pers-6715)
Call DSN 882-4626, commercial (901) 874-4626, or [Email](#)

OxyContin Awareness Training

INTRODUCTION

OxyContin is a highly addictive prescription painkiller used for moderate to high pain relief. Doctors prescribe OxyContin typically for pain associated with injuries, bursitis, dislocation, fractures, neuralgia, arthritis, lower back pain, and cancer. OxyContin contains oxycodone, the medication's active ingredient, in a timed-release tablet. Oxycodone is also the main ingredient in Percocet and Percodan, pain relievers typically prescribed for patients after dental surgery. Oxycodone products have been illegally abused for the past 30 years.

Because OxyContin produces opiate-like effects, the drug is sometimes used as a substitute for heroin. Illegal uses of OxyContin include crushing the tablet and ingesting or snorting it. Most individuals who abuse this drug do so to gain a feeling of euphoria, relieve pain, and to avoid withdrawal symptoms. Those who take the drug repeatedly can develop a tolerance or resistance to the drug's effects.

WHAT IS OXYCONTIN?



OxyContin tablets, Figure 1

OxyContin is the brand name of a time-release formula of the pain-relieving compound oxycodone. OxyContin, which is produced by the pharmaceutical company Purdue Pharma, is prescribed as a pain medication. Instances of abuse of this drug have increased in recent years.

OxyContin most commonly exists in tablet form. These round pills come in 10mg, 20mg, 40mg, 80mg, and 160mg dosages. OxyContin also comes in capsule or liquid form. Street names for OxyContin are Oxy, OxyCotton, Oxy 80 (for the 80mg dose), Hillbilly Heroin, Kicker, or OC.



OxyContin tablets and capsules, Figure 2

OxyContin contains a time controlled-release medication that, when used correctly, provides extended relief of pain associated with cancer, back pain, or arthritis. However, often when the drug is abused, the tablets are chewed, crushed and snorted, or mixed with water and injected. This eliminates the time-release factor, allowing for a quick and intense rush to the brain. This practice can lead to overdosing on OxyContin's active ingredient, oxycodone, by releasing too much of the medication into the bloodstream too quickly. OxyContin is highly addictive - so higher doses of the drug must be taken when a tolerance develops. The numbers of abusers of the drug have risen drastically and steadily over the last few years.

PRODUCTION AND TRAFFICKING

Purdue Pharma introduced OxyContin, an opiate painkiller, in 1995. Most individuals prescribed OxyContin will not become addicted, although they may become dependent on the drug and will experience withdrawal symptoms when use is stopped. Drugs such as OxyContin can be diverted in many ways. The most popular form is known as "doctor shopping," where individuals, who may or may not have legitimate illnesses requiring a doctor's prescription for controlled substances, visit many doctors to acquire large amounts of controlled substances. Other diversion methods include pharmacy diversion and improper prescribing practices by physicians.

Crimes related to OxyContin sales are usually non-violent, although violent crimes have been reported in Boston, Honolulu, Los Angeles, and Portland relating to OxyContin sales. Most of the crimes include robbery, burglary, larceny, and other property crimes.

According to the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), illegal retail prices for Oxycodone from 1996-2000 ranged from \$1.30 for 10

milligrams to \$14 for 160 milligrams. Illegal prices for Oxycodone ranged from \$5-\$12 for 10 milligrams to \$60-\$100 per 160 milligrams.

According to the Drug Enforcement Administration, during 2000, there were 432 OxyContin theft and loss incidents, with the majority of incidents from employee pilferage. OxyContin thefts and loss incidents increased to 905 during 2002, with the majority of incidents from night break-ins, armed robberies, and employee pilferage. As of June 2003, there were 399 OxyContin theft and loss incidents. The chart below (from www.stopaddiction.com) indicates the numbers of OxyContin related incidents reported by the Drug Enforcement Agency from 2000 - 2003:

Type of Incident	2000	2001	2002	2003*	Total
Night Break-ins	176	204	206	121	707
Armed Robberies	43	204	277	107	631
Employee Pilferage	119	217	273	95	704
Customer Theft	15	20	28	24	87
Lost in Transit	79	113	121	52	365
Total Incidents	432	758	905	399	2,494

* Half year data

Commanding officers who suspect OxyContin abuse among sailors should contact the Navy Drug Screening Laboratory Great Lakes, Jacksonville, or San Diego for further information and guidance.

SHORT TERM EFFECTS

The most serious risk associated with OxyContin, is respiratory depression. Because of this, OxyContin combined with other substances that slow down breathing, such as alcohol, antihistamines (like some cold or allergy medication), barbiturates, or benzodiazepines will result in breathing difficulties. Other common side effects include constipation, nausea, sedation, dizziness, vomiting, headache, dry mouth, sweating, and weakness. Toxic overdose and/or death can occur by taking the tablet broken, chewed, or crushed. People who abuse the drug (by removing the time-release coating) will experience effects for up to 5 hours. The high felt is opiate-like; a sedate, euphoric feeling.

LONG TERM EFFECTS

Using OxyContin chronically can result in increased tolerance to the drug in which higher doses of the medication must be taken to receive the initial effect. Over time, OxyContin will become physically addictive, causing a person to experience withdrawal symptoms when the drug is not present. Symptoms of withdrawal include restlessness, muscle and bone pain, insomnia, diarrhea, vomiting, cold flashes with goose bumps, and involuntary leg movements.

LEGISLATION AND UCMJ

Oxycodone is a Schedule II drug under the Controlled Substances Act. Schedule II substances have a high potential for abuse, a currently accepted medical use in treatment in the United States with severe restrictions, and may lead to severe psychological or physical dependence. Illegal use of any drug is punishable under the UCMJ. Navy personnel who know or suspect illegal use of OxyContin or any drug among sailors are required by U.S. Navy Regulations to report such incidents to their immediate supervisor, commanding officer, security agency (e.g. base police or Master-at-Arms) or to the local Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS).

Many States have launched efforts to curb the illegal use of OxyContin. Louisiana, Maine, Virginia, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee have enacted legislation to deal with this issue. Hawaii, California, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Utah, Michigan, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Texas, and Washington have established programs to monitor OxyContin prescriptions. Many more States are working to establish legislation and prescription monitoring programs to deal with drugs diverted to illegal users.

PLAN OF THE DAY NOTES

- ◆ Nine (9) percent or 19.9 million Americans have used pain relievers illegally in their lifetime. Abuse of OxyContin in rural Maine, Kentucky, Virginia, and West Virginia brought national attention to this problem. The areas most currently affected by OxyContin abuse are eastern Kentucky; New Orleans, Louisiana; southern Maine; Philadelphia and southwestern Pennsylvania; southwestern Virginia; Cincinnati, Ohio; and Phoenix, Arizona. An increase in illegal use of OxyContin has been especially apparent on the East Coast.
- ◆ OxyContin is the brand name of a time-release formula of the pain relieving chemical Oxycodone. OxyContin is prescribed as a

pain medication. Instances of abuse of this drug have increased in recent years.

- ◆ Oxycodone is a key ingredient in the drugs Percodan and Percocet, which are commonly prescribed to relieve pain after medical or dental surgery. Sailors suspecting or know of other sailors who are abusing OxyContin are required to inform their chain of command.
- ◆ Long-term usage of OxyContin can lead to physical dependence. A large dosage can cause severe respiratory depression that can lead to death. Withdrawal symptoms include restlessness, muscle and bone pain, insomnia, diarrhea, vomiting, cold flashes with goose bumps, and involuntary leg movements.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON
OXYCONTIN**

More information can be obtained from:

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) by logging on the NIDA website: www.drugabuse.gov or call toll free 1-888-644-6432;

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol & Drug Information (NCADI) Website: www.health.org or call toll free 1-800-729-6686;

Office of National Drug Control Policy Website: www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov;

Navy Drug Detection and Deterrence Branch (Pers-671) DSN 882-4626; commercial (901) 874-4246. [Email](#)

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